

Hobbies

Lawmakers on board an omnibus coin bill

By Roger Boye

Lawmakers in Washington have approved one of the largest commemorative coinage bills in U.S. history, a package of programs designed to raise millions of dollars for special causes over the next three years.

On April 28, the U.S. Senate voted 75-22 for the so-called "omnibus coinage bill," which authorizes the production of 10 commemorative-coin types and a silver medal. House members had approved the same bill on a 414-

0 vote about three weeks earlier.

President Bush is expected to sign the legislation this month. One of the coins would raise money for improvements to the White House, an effort supported by Barbara Bush.

Early this spring, the U.S. House voted 206-199 to kill the coinage bill because it included a provision that would force the government to place new designs on the "tails sides" of circulating quarters and half dollars. But the measure passed in the House a few days later after the redesign

section was removed.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D, Calif.) and other coin-redesign advocates lobbied to have their pet proposal reinstated, but to no avail.

Under the legislation, one of the coins Uncle Sam would be authorized to produce would be a 1992-dated silver dollar commemorating the 200th anniversary of the laying of the White House cornerstone. Surcharges from the sale of coins to collectors will help pay for the refurbishing of public rooms in the White House.